

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application and does not require further search by the Examiner.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-6, 9-15 and 18 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 10, which are independent, are hereby amended. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification, specifically on pages 40-42 and 65. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment. Claims 7, 8, 16 and 17 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS

Claims 1-6, 9-15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,405,371 to Oosterhout et al. (hereinafter, merely "Oosterhout") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,219,837 to Yeo et al. (hereinafter, merely "Yeo"), in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,977,974 to Hatori et al. (hereinafter, merely "Hatori") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,253,218 to Aoki et al. (hereinafter, merely "Aoki").

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

"An information providing apparatus comprising:

...focus setting means for setting a focus on an image positioned at an area surrounded by a frame, among the plurality of images displayed,

wherein said image is enlarged until an image becomes equal to or larger than a predetermined value which renders the image gradually transparent in view of said plurality of images displayed, and

wherein said image is switched to a display of a child screen when the image becomes equal to or larger than said predetermined value...

wherein the plurality of images are arranged such that elapsed time is depicted and the images gradually fade toward the center of the spiral from the outer circumferential side such that background images are visible... (emphasis added)

As understood by Applicants, Oosterhout relates to a method of navigating through television programs. A television receiver displays a mosaic image with sub-images representing available programs. The receiver further receives an electronic program guide with program descriptions. Upon activating a "theme" button, the viewer can enter a desired program type, e.g. "movie". In response thereto, the brightness of the sub-images representing programs that are not desired is reduced. The user is assisted in navigating through programs of interest, while maintaining the mosaic structure, and without losing the association between channels and their positions on the mosaic screen.

As understood by Applicants, Yeo relates to providing summary frames in video. Specifically, channel surfers are aided by summary frames appearing on the screen along with the regular program. These summary frames are embedded in the broadcast and appear in a small window on the screen as the video is broadcast.

As understood by Applicants, Hatori relates to an information processing apparatus and method. A plurality of data items is stored in a storage medium, and time information of each of the plurality of data items is obtained. A display window on a display screen displays a time axis, having a spiral shape, which includes arrangement positions, each corresponding to a predetermined period of time. At each of the arrangement positions, on the time axis, corresponding to time represented by the obtained time information of each of the plurality of data items, information (data icons) representing the corresponding data item is displayed. The display sizes of the data icons are reduced toward the center of the spiral time axis, thereby depth can be expressed.

As understood by Applicants, Aoki relates to a data display method for displaying data stored as a database on a display device. The user can manage the data and retrieve the information by visualizing individual data files in the database and the relationship among each item of the data.

Applicants submit that Oosterhout, Yeo, Hatori and Aoki, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the above-identified features of claim 1. Specifically, Applicants submit that there is no teaching or suggestion of an image processing apparatus comprising an information providing apparatus wherein the plurality of images are arranged such that elapsed time is depicted and the images gradually fade toward the center of the spiral from the outer circumferential side such that background images are visible, as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable.

For reasons similar to those described above with regard to independent claim 1, independent claim 10 is also believed to be patentable.

Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 10 are patentable.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims are dependent from one of the independent claims, discussed above, and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION


In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited reference, or references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portion or portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for a contrary view.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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